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ABSTRACT

The aim of this pamphlet is to make secondary school students aware of the interdependence of peoples throughout the world and of their own responsibility to the world at large. The pamphlet is written from a Christian and a socioeconomic perspective. The text is arranged into the following broad areas of continuing world problems: the Third World, population, food, poverty, refugees, race, resources, and "one world." It is recommended that these sections be used with a map or globe, and that they be supported by additional materials from current newspapers, magazines, and television documentaries. Each section is divided into subtopics, which are often presented in question-answer format. Maps and graphs accompany the text, and several sections are followed by assignment suggestions relating to the topic, or by illustrative quotations from the Bible and other sources. A list of organizations where students may obtain additional information and a brief syllabus of suggested readings for both teachers and students are also provided. (Author/MK)

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OUR WORLD

by Harry Undy

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CEM Topic Folder Number Three - OUR WORLD

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OUR WORLD

Only the most severely handicapped person can be unaware that there is a great big world "out there". This is impressed upon us not only by television and radio documentaries and news reports in these media and the newspapers, but also by roadside posters advertising Rum, Sausages, Tobacco, Tyres and apparently almost everything else. It is difficult to know just what effect the media presentations have on either adults or young people but probably the general feeling is one of "their" difference and separation, possibly even of a looming threat.

This Topic Folder is intended to show that the world is not "them" but "us". It is in one important sense "our world" and we have a responsibility for it. In the same way we are affected either dramatically or imperceptibly by what happens in all parts of the world of people. Some of the information given in this Topic Folder refers to dramatic events but most of it refers to continuing situations. The separate sections should all be supported by additional material gathered from current newspapers, magazines, etc. Various T.V. documentary series add invaluable material and by relating such programmes to this kind of study the danger of voyeurism can be minimised. Throughout, the kind of change which is emphasised is "development" rather than "aid".

1. The Third World

The title is used because it is well known. There are growing objections to the phrase because it implies an acceptance of permanent separation and superior/inferior status, while ignoring the causal relationships between the First, Second and Third Worlds. It would be as well sometimes to use the term "The Poor World", although this may carry for some an implication of condescension and shame. Help the students to look for other terms which are in use from time to time (e.g. the North-South Conflict) and to enquire into the reasons why various terms come into use.

2. Population

The dramatic increase in population results in the current expression "population explosion". It is important to see that population increase is not a new phenomenon and that the current rapid expansion in population is due to a number of factors, mostly concerned with death rather than birth. It would be useful to study the population trends in Britain and Western Europe and to discover what happens if the population falls suddenly e.g. in the Scottish Highlands, or in parts of

London such as areas around the docks. The emphasis in using the paper should be the importance of the whole of human family life when considering population theories and statistics.

3. Food

We use the title "Food" rather than "Hunger", to point attention towards positive rather than negative feelings. One problem in speaking of hunger is that we are accustomed to saying that we are hungry by the end of an afternoon even if we have already eaten two meals in the day. The use of "starving children" pictures is dangerous because it reinforces the idea of a beggar-donor relationship but if carefully used, such pictures could amplify one major point in this paper. The amount of enquiry into the technical realm of dietetics will vary from group to group but there should be some awareness of the type and quantity of food which members of the group expect. There should be opportunities for considerable research in the school and the locality.

4. Poverty

It would be useful to look at the areas of poverty which remain in Britain and this is vividly expressed in the field of housing. The modern British situation could well be contrasted with the Britain of Charles Dickens and even the Britain of the Tudor Poor laws. John Wesley's view that one should 'earn as much as you can, save as much as you can and give as much as you can' might be discussed. The reluctant recognition in 1976 that the international situation required the government to plan for a reduction in the standard of living in Britain (even if resented and described as temporary) might give an opportunity to discuss the ways in which the level of individual or regional wealth depends on the situation elsewhere.

5. Refugees

The use of a map is recommended in this paper although a globe would be more appropriate. If a map is used every effort should be made to obtain an equal area projection (Peter's Orthogonal map, first published in Germany, is highly recommended). With some groups, the flight of Mary and Joseph with Jesus to Egypt, or Abraham's flight to Egypt with Sara, or the Hejira of Muhammad, might be part of a study of the personal strain on refugees. The subject might be extended to include migrant workers with reference to the way they were treated in Europe during the long period of boom contrasted with their treatment during recession (especially in Switzerland and West Germany).

6. Race

Arguments over race and racial discrimination ensure that this topic is in the minds of people everywhere in Britain. It is important not to exacerbate feelings which may already be latent or active in the group but race can be put into the category where it belongs - the suspicion of what is different and strange. There are many examples of reaction in fear of the rivalry of the "other" which might be the people on the New Estate, the young school leavers looking for a job, etc. With some groups it might be useful to distinguish between race and colour. The

question of whether people can be "made good by law" will probably be raised, with the consequent arguments about preventing active evil on one hand, or reinforcing apathy on the other. As there are obvious differences between races, what did St. Paul mean by saying "... there is no longer Jew or Gentile ..."?

7. Resources

A common measure of personal success is the quantity of possessions. The materialistic society depends on this kind of evaluation. In fact there is a limit to growth and this means that the foundations of the materialistic society will be shaken. This paper tries to look at the need to be responsible in our use of resources in order that present prolifigacy should not destroy the future of our own generations. Questions of priorities will be seen in local, national and international contexts, whether in terms of local authorities dumping or recycling rubbish, of investing in research into solar or nuclear sources of energy, or of agreements relating to the oceans and atmosphere.

8. One World

A comfortable relationship with our environment (which includes people) relies upon an adequate philosophy of life. All the major world religions attempt to provide such a philosophy and it might be interesting to examine, for example, the attitude of the tribal religions to the place of the community in the world. This paper attempts not just to express contemporary Western cultural views but to go deeper than this, however simply. Many of the most influential writers who consider this general area of concern write from a Christian viewpoint and their findings and opinions should be consulted.

ADDRESSES Pupils might obtain further information from the following organisations. A stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed with each enquiry.

British Council of Churches, Race Relations Unit, 10,Eaton Gate, London SW1W
Catholic Fund for Overseas Development, 21a, Soho Square, W1V 6NR (9BT
Catholic Institute for International Relations, 44 Holland Pk, London W11 3RP
Child Poverty Action Group, 1, Macklin Street, London, WC2.
Christian Aid, P.O. Box No. 1. London SW1W 9BW.
Community Relations Commission, 15-16, Bedford St. London WC2E 9HX
Jewish National Fund, Rex House, 4, Regents Street, London SW1Y 4PG
Ministry of Overseas Development, Eland Hse, Stag Place, London SW1.
Oxfam, 274 Banbury Road, Oxford.
Race Relations Board, 5, Lower Belgrave Street, London, SW1.
TEAR Fund, 1, Bridgeman Road, Teddington, TW11 9AJ
Voluntary Committee on Overseas Aid & Development, 25, Wilton Rd. London SW1V
War on Want, 2b, The Grove, Ealing, London W.5. (IJS

READING Many books are available at various levels, but teachers and pupils will find the following helpful.

CEM PROBES: Population, Community Relations, World Development, Survival, Liberation (see catalogue for further details & additional titles)

New Internationalist - monthly magazine. World Wide Series Batsford
Small is Beautiful E. Schumacher. Enough is Enough John V. Taylor
Food for Thought (Study Kit) Christian Aid/Oxfam/CAFOD.

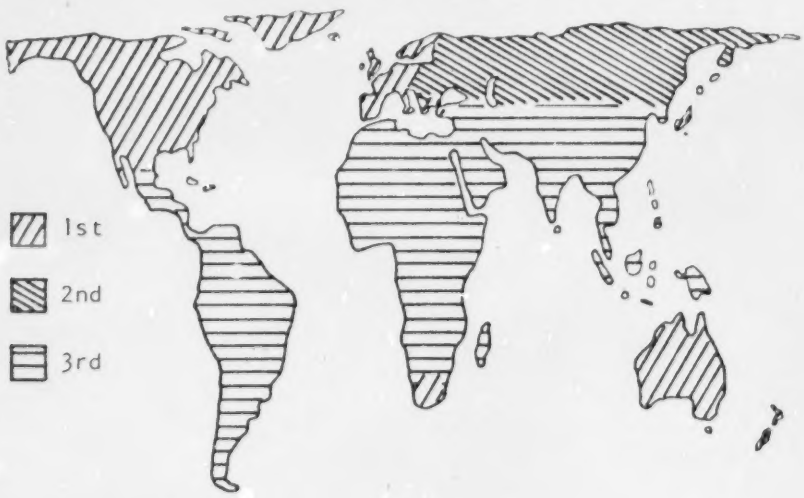
The Third World

Why the 'Third' World?

We start counting with ourselves; we the rich and powerful "West", are the first world.

Then we look to the USSR and its allies; they, the rich and powerful "Communist Block", are the Second World.

All the rest, who are not rich and powerful enough to compete with us or to threaten us, are the Third World.



Is that last description true?

Most of the time, yes. We think it is not quite fair when they stop being poor and weak. If the countries which produce oil, or copper, or sugar, join together to use their power as producers against us as consumers, we complain about commercial blackmail, and say that trade ought not to be used as a weapon.

For our economic privilege we want them to be "not rich and powerful enough to compete with us or to threaten us", and our commerce and industry try to keep it that way.

Is the Third World developing ?

We can't ask that question yet. It sounds as though we know what we are talking about - and we don't. First we ask the more important question:

What do we mean by 'developing' ?

This is an economist's word, and is all tied up with statistical calculations like Gross National Product and Per Capita Income, etc. It is such a narrow view that we must distrust it for its incompleteness.

The two main points are (as it seems to someone who is not an economist):

> If a country makes a lot of things and earns a lot of money, it is "developed" - this is even more so if every year it produces a lot more and earns a lot more than in the previous years.
>
> If you divide the country's earnings this year by its total population, and the answer is greater than the answer to the same sum with last year's figures, everybody is better off - development is increasing.

We seem to think that if we are able to make it, we must make it, and then we must sell it, whether it is any use or not. Our extra production and extra sales are signs of our "development". If no one here will buy it, we send powerful sales teams to persuade people in poorer countries to buy it.

What is DEVELOPMENT ?

Money must be part of it. Real poverty leads to starvation, starvation leads to death, and a corpse cannot develop.

But if there is enough wealth for a reasonable life (more than just survival) development must include very much more than money. A developed society ought to be able to enjoy life more than a non-developed society.

Development cannot just mean standing by a bigger lathe, or a faster packing machine, or making fancier plastic bottles. Development ought to include ways of enjoying leisure, freedom to choose how to live, ability to get on with other people in cooperation, and under-

standing how we are affected by nature (and how we are responsible for our environment), and a lot more things that cannot be measured and turned into statistics.

Developed countries

The rich countries have more wealth than the poor countries (after all, that is what the words mean). Perhaps on the other parts of the test, the poor countries may be better developed than the rich ones. Perhaps "developed" means what people would most want life to be like for peace and joy and love, and we might think that this does not fit in with a "rat race".

"Developed" is not often used in this way; should we start a new fashion in using the word, or should we take a new word?

Causes of poverty

(Material poverty, not spiritual or moral poverty.)

The short answer is - the greed of the rich. A longer answer would be very long, and has already been written in many books and papers. Perhaps the world is so rich now that we do not have to put up with poverty anywhere.

If the wealth produced by a country increases, but most of the increase is taken by those who are already rich (and who control commerce, industry, the banks etc.), the poor become poorer. Even in poor countries, there are some who are rich (in Kenya, the richest tenth of the population of Nairobi earn as much as the poorest three-quarters of the city's people). In many poor countries, most of those who are already rich are foreigners.

The same happens on a world scale. Technology helps us to produce more, but as things are the poor countries get poorer and the rich countries get richer.

Aid

Well, what about it? Why is it given?

Some people give to ease their consciences. A few scraps from the rich man's table, and he still has more than enough left while being able to say that he has saved some starving babies. The rich man gets most out of this, for he does not miss what he gave, and the starving babies will survive to become starving children under the same system.

Some people give to help the poor to improve their own poor situation.

Another table is set up alongside the rich man's, and an adequately nutritious diet is prepared for the poor. The rich man still controls the kitchen, and the people who sit at the second table must first serve his needs.

Some people give to help to keep the poor alive while they all work together for basic changes. People sit to eat while they work out a new diet with new menus.

How can changes be made ?

By taking seriously the idea of sharing. God creates and loves one humanity; there is not really a rich man's table with scraps to be spared - there is one table with plenty to be shared (enough for need but not for greed). The rich and powerful will lose some of their wealth and perhaps all their power; what will happen in the meantime, and will the change be peaceful and generous, or violent and bitter?

Sometimes it seems to go like this:

"Are your people starving? We will lend you some money, and you can buy from us some food, some seeds, some machinery and some teaching". (And so our money comes back to us, with a profit, but of course they still owe us the money - and with interest). "Now, about that money you owe us; we will take things we want, and we will fix the price. It is a pity if this takes your people, and your other resources away from producing more food." "Are your people starving? We will lend you ..." .

It would have to be a political decision, but we could change this. God's word is much more likely to be "share" than to be "lend" or "exploit".

Find out what decisions were made at the United Nations Conferences on Trade and Development. Select two or three of the resolutions and find out what happened to them.

Find out which of the "Third World"countries are exporters of important raw materials (e.g. oil, copper, coffee). What is the national income of these countries? What is the national income of Ethopia, Belize and Burma? From which "Third World" countries does Britain import manufactured goods?

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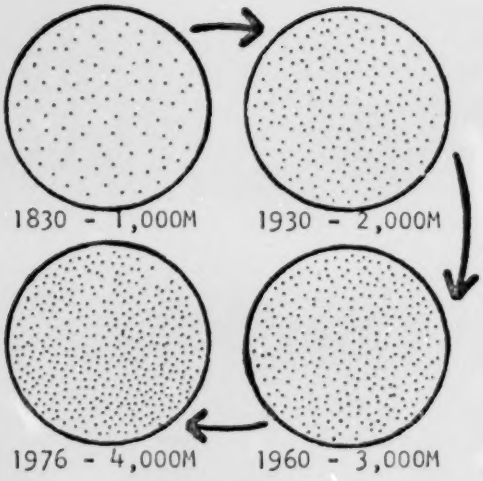
Population



People

Much of what is said about population is given as statistics and problems. The result is that many people who try to think about the subject never come to the point of thinking that it is about people. No one can understand what is happening unless they begin with PEOPLE.

Population Growth is CHILDREN BEING BORN AND LIVING.

Much of what we read is written as though there is only one point of view - and because it takes a lot of money to set up a large scale publicity campaign, the point of view which we see most often is that of the rich nations (i.e. the highest ambition of all is to get more possessions). Remember this as you read books and papers.

When reading anything about population, remember that it is written from some particular point of view and is not purely neutral. (This paper is written from the point of view that there ought to be a policy of reducing population growth together with a policy of seeking international and national social justice, and that modern methods of family planning are acceptable).

Statistics can be very useful, but they can also be very dangerous. Remember especially that any figures given for the future are not facts but guesses - though they may be very accurate guesses if

the future is not too distant.

History

It has taken over 10,000 years for the human population of the world to reach its present size.

A rapid growth of population (sometimes called a population explosion) is caused by fewer people dying, not by an increase in the number of children conceived in an ordinary family. More people live longer if their food is improved and if some diseases are conquered.

The increase in population accelerates because once the survival rate improves, succeeding generations start with ever bigger populations to which the new increased survival rate applies. Even if the rate of increase was cut everywhere now, actual numbers would continue to grow. The children who will be the parents in the next generation of the explosion are already alive. At 2% per annum population doubles in 35 years.

The old explosion

When European populations "exploded" three other things were happening about the same time:

the industrial revolution was making it possible to bring big numbers of people together in towns with hopes of employment (although social conditions were terrible);
the agricultural revolution was making new areas of land available and was also increasing the yield per acre;
the rest of the world was becoming more accessible and many thousands of people were "exported" and so did not become a threat to their homelands (e.g. deportation of criminals to Australia and the campaign for settlers in South Africa in 1820).

The new explosion

The rapid increase in population has come much later in the more southerly lands, and the world situation is very different:

the richer northern nations control the industrial system, and poorer nations find it very difficult to industrialise effectively;
the climate and soil are often not so productive and large quantities of expensive fertiliser are required to improve yields;

the rest of the world is able to control the rate of immigration now, and will not take large parts of the "surplus population".

A lot must depend on whether we think of people as belonging to the world or to separate nations.

Attitudes

Rich governments are rich because their nations are rich; their nations are rich partly because they are lucky in their mineral and other natural resources, partly because their population went into balance at the right time.

In considering the conditions on which they relate to poor nations they may demand that these other nations adopt a pattern like that which suits the rich nations now. This is seen as the best way of protecting the wealth of the rich nations.

Weak governments are weak because their nations are poor, or because they are small, or some mixture of both. The only natural resource they can increase is their people, and this is a particularly sensible thing for them to do if they are at all afraid that a bigger nation might attack them.

They want to become strong, so that they can demand their share of the world's wealth, instead of just asking for pity.

Governments, whether rich or strong, do not have babies. Parents have babies, and mostly parents and grandparents and aunts and uncles and brothers and sisters love children. Even in poor families, many parents feel that the children are welcome. Some parents depend on having many children to bring wages into the family, or to work on the family land or in the family business. In some societies and religions the parents' pride depends on having many children.

Until parents can find other ambitions, attitudes like this will lead to big families. When it is seen to be "good" (for both children and family) to have few children, the birth rate falls.

Babies are born to women (mothers) not to fathers. In countries and groups where women are not given real respect as people, but are treated with some respect if they have a large family, the birth rate will be high but women will not be able to contribute much else to the community.

If women have real equality in the community, many improvements follow for everyone.

An important concern for nations and individuals is SECURITY. The

State has to offer security to parents if the State expects the parents to give up the security which they feel they have in many children. A promise that things will be better is not enough; things must be seen to be better.

Failures

Many attempts to reduce the birth rate in poor countries have failed. Governments have set up big propaganda campaigns, with posters and exhibitions, and have sometimes offered to pay people who say they will take the advice and the treatment. Minor criminals who accept sterilization have been released from prison. It seems that on occasions the campaign has been paid for by a rich foreign country, perhaps as part of a "development package". Great expense has not produced great effect.

Sometimes the birth control methods have been too complicated, or offensive in the local way of life. Sometimes the methods of communication have been unsuitable, and have annoyed or amused the people without persuading them.

Generally, the promises and half-promises that have been made are the kind that would appeal to people with a fair education, reasonable employment and promotion prospects, and access to an adquate medical service; they do not convince the poor.

Family poverty and world over-population must be tackled together as parts of one problem.

Some figures on population -

	1950	1974	2000
Europe	413,000,000	515,000,000	641,000,000
USSR	180,000,000	253,000,000	330,000,000
Africa	222,000,000	385,000,000	817,000,000
Americas	329,000,000	557,000,000	985,000,000
Australasia & Oceania	13,000,000	21,000,000	35,000,000
Asia	1,360,000,000	2,245,000,000	3,705,000,000
		(China	1,165,000,000)
		(India	1,084,000,000)
World	2,500,000,000	4,000,000,000	7,000,000,000

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Food

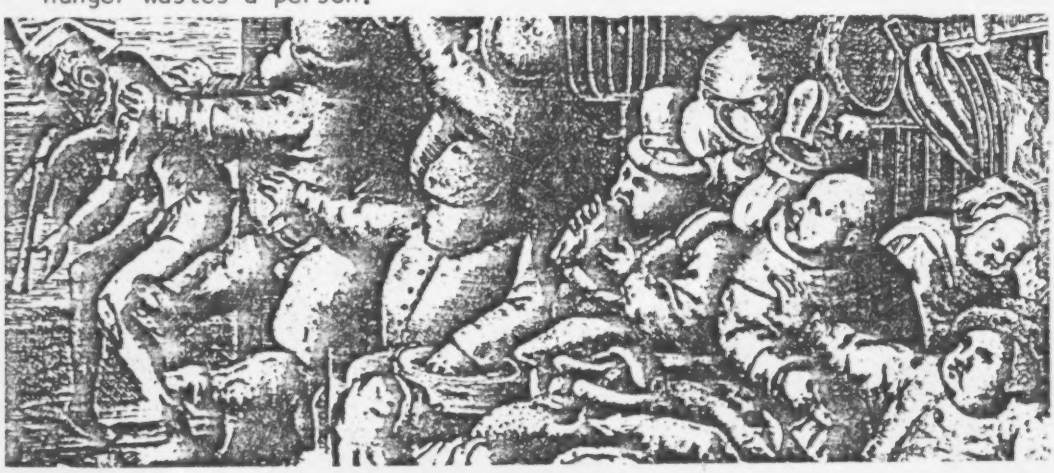
Hunger is real

Starvation kills people.

Hunger prepares the way for quite ordinary diseases - like measles - to kill people.

Hunger stops children growing up properly. Their bodies and their brains cannot develop, and they never recover completely from the bad start if they do not have enough in the first four or five years of life.

Hunger brings pain, a pain that may not be much noticed if it is always there, but still a pain that spoils life. Hunger is not just the peckishness that comes if a meal or two are late or missed. Hunger wastes a person.



The Flemish picture from the 16th century shows the hungry man being thrown out by the fat and well-fed, but hunger is here in the 20th Century too. 460,000,000 people are now actually starving - according to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation.

A third of all mankind is now ill with chronic hunger - a statement by ex-Chancellor Willy Brandt to a UNICEF meeting.

100,000 people died in one year of drought and famine in the Sahel region of Africa. In the 60 nations which suffer most from famine, about 10,000 people die every day.

This situation can be changed - if we find out the causes and are then willing to do something. It is more than an insult to starving and hungry people to just study them and do nothing.

Enough food

We can in fact measure hunger.

Scientists tell us that a man or woman working in light industry needs a daily intake of about 2,700 calories for health; the figures are lower for sedentary work (2,500), and higher for heavy work. When someone goes on a slimming diet, their intake is reduced to about 1,800 calories a day, but only for a limited period. A crash diet of 1000 calories has been suggested, but only under strict conditions, and even this has been criticised.

The basic minimum for an adequate daily diet is about 2,300 calories.

In Haiti, the average daily intake of calories is 1,730 per person, in India it is 1,990.

Calories are not the only important contents of food. For good health, vitamins and proteins are also important, but for life the first need is simply to have enough. If someone does not eat enough calories, extra protein would have to be changed into calories by that person's body. (For a proper explanation, as the science teachers).

Malnutrition

Malnutrition means wrong feeding.

There are several reasons for having the wrong food, but all of them damage the body.

Too much food is dangerous. Apart from the discomfort and danger of being overweight, it is expensive to buy too much food and then it is expensive again to pay for medicines, special diets, and treatment. (£40,000,000 a year is spent on slimming in Britain).

Some people cannot grow enough food. This might be because of climate or lack of proper seed and equipment, or because they have no land. (Many people in towns have no land, but there is a big difference between being a peasant who has been evicted and being an industrial wage earner). These hungry ones want to be able to feed themselves.

Some people cannot buy enough food. 400,000,000 people have less than £22 a year income and some prices keep going up. In 1970 the selling price of 10 lbs of Indian tea equalled the purchase price of 2.6 bushels of wheat; in 1974, the sale of 10 lbs of tea would buy only 1.7 bushels of wheat.

When there is a shortage of grain, Russia can buy from the USA, but India cannot afford the high prices.

In parts of Peru, the price of a chicken is the equivalent of the wages for 2 days field work by a man (or 3 days by a woman). In these areas, the people do not often eat meat. Investment in local agricultural schemes could change their lives, but investment money goes into schemes which aim at greater profits through exports. 40% of the people of Peru have an income of less than £50 a year, and though they spend 78% of their income on food they still do not have enough food for health.

Some people are persuaded to waste their money. In America and Europe, mothers are being taught that they should breast feed their babies if possible, and British laws have made Cow & Gate and Ostermilk reduce the claims they made on the labels of their baby-food tins sold in Britain. The baby-food firms put on a big advertising campaign in West Africa to persuade mothers there that they should buy expensive powdered milk for their babies. This campaign was very effective in persuading mothers to buy, but very ineffective in telling them how to use the powder. Many babies died. A campaign in Britain has made the government take action against the British firms involved, and the babies may now get a better deal. Similar critisms have been made of Coca Cola and other commercial advertising campaigns.

Some countries export food to pay for imports which their richer people will buy. One third of the African peanut (ground nut) crop is sold to Europe to be turned into animal feed. Ground nuts are a very good food, but it is more profitable to export to European pets than to sell to local people (who may be starving).

Stamp out starvation

There is enough food in the world to feed everybody. It is not production which is wrong but distribution.

The USA buys 700,000 tonnes of protein rich fish meal from Peru and Chile to feed to cattle and pigs, which turn a small fraction of it into meat. The fish meal would supply enough protein for 15,000,000 people a year.

Britain imports grain, soya and fish meal to feed to cattle, pigs and poultry. A 50g (2oz) piece of meat on the plate may represent up to 1kg (about 2 lbs) of food that could have gone direct to people.

One-tenth of the grain fed to beef cattle in 1974 would have been enough to make up the whole of Asia's grain needs.

By the year 2000, the need will be not only to change the distribution of food, but to change the use of land also. At present many millions of acres of prime land are used for non-food crops.

Change values

We do not have to put up with the shame of this kind of hunger situation among our fellow people.

The world's spending on military resources is about $685,000,000 every day. International experts say that the real threat to peace is poverty - either by the destitute within a country rebelling, or by poor nations deciding they have nothing to lose if they attack a rich nation.

The annual cost of investment in land and water needed for poor nations to meet food production targets is $4,500,000,000 (United Nations Food & Agriculture Organisation) - that is the military cost of 6½ days.

The annual cost of ending world illiteracy in a 5 year programme is $1,600,000,000 (UNICEF) - that is the military cost of 2½ days.

Something can be done about hunger - if people are willing.

Find out as much as possible about Kwashiorkor, Marasmus, Beri-beri, Pellagra and Obesity.

It is said that of all the food prepared for eating in Britain, a quarter is wasted. Try to find out what proportion is wasted in your school and in your home.

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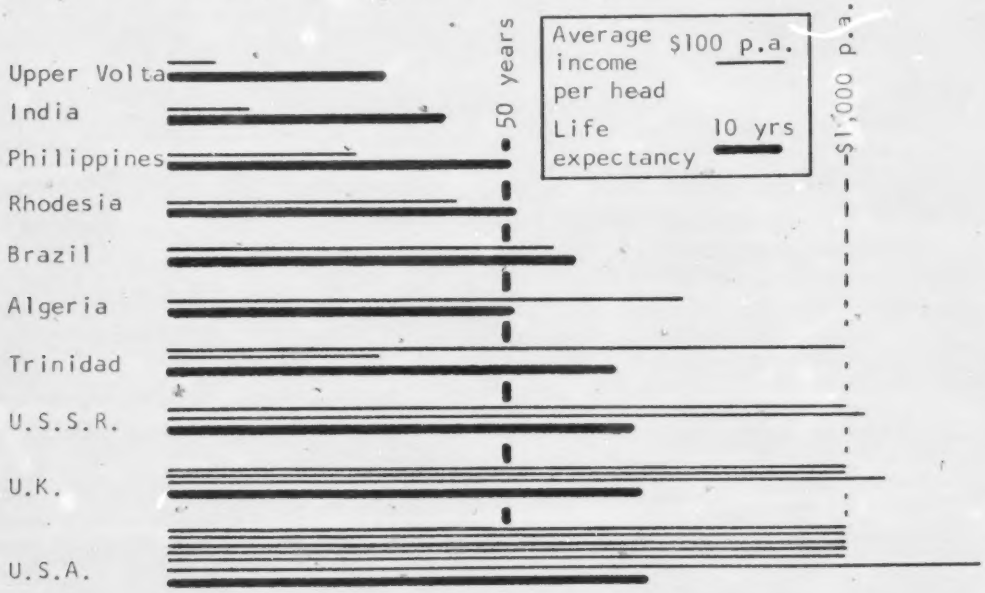
Poverty

Poverty is a word which really means lack of money and possessions - it is an economic term.

Like many words in the English language it is used for a much wider range of ideas, and may refer to qualities which are not at all economic. When "poor" appears on a school report, it is not saying that the pupil has no money.

Poverty may be absolute or it may be relative.

When members of a family die because they cannot afford shelter, medicine or food (and their neighbours cannot spare anything to help), and those who still live just exist from day to day without interest or hope, that is absolute poverty.



The poorest die youngest

When a family would like a colour T.V. like all the neigbours but can only afford a pocket transistor radio, would like a car like all the neighbours but can hardly afford new shoes, would like a holiday in Spain like all the neighbours but has to sit on the front steps of the house in summer, that family will feel poor even if it has more than sufficient for basic food, shelter, medicine, education etc. That is relative poverty.

A family which is only relatively poor may feel really deprived, while a family which is absolutely poor may not; in such cases the materially wealthier family may be spiritually poorer because energy is taken up with envy.

Damage

It would be very hard to understand the mind of anyone who thought that absolute poverty is a good thing. Real poverty brings real suffering through cold, hunger, and disease; it also brings another form of suffering because of all the possible enjoyment of life which it prevents.

Wealth brings its own sufferings. Obesity, heart and lung diseases, boredom and sleeplessness are reported to be more common among the rich, and after spending too much on food more has to be spent on diets, dentists and drugs.

There is a connection between great wealth for a few and poverty for many; both the absolute rich and the absolute poor might have better health if the wealth were to be shared more evenly - but perhaps the rich would not like the suggestion.

In 50 countries, the average income is less than £100 a year. Some people will be able to grow some food, but only the rich few will be able to eat enough for proper health and strength. The life expectancy in Bangladesh is 49 years (men) 47 years (women), while the average life expectancy in Britain is 68 years (men) 74 years (women). Malnutrition in the first four years of a child's life causes damage that cannot be repaired.

Changing systems

Government and voluntary agencies in Britain and other Western nations have said they want to help the "poorest of the poor", but they are finding this difficult to do. The poorest of the poor are at the bottom on the "pecking order" in their own countries, and people with more authority and influence may use the money to help those whom they think are more "important" groups.

The projects which would really help the poorest of the poor are

often small local schemes, which are hard to arrange. In several rich countries, the governments make grants to voluntary agencies (i.e. bodies like Christian Aid, Oxfam, etc), because they are better suited to set up small schemes than the government to government arrangements.

The greatest difficulty of all whether in Britain or Bangladesh or anywhere, is that really changing the status of the poorest of the poor also changes all the rest of the national or international society. It is easier to study, or to write about, or to alleviate poverty than it is to risk losing some of one's own privileges by trying to eliminate true poverty.

Effects

What does poverty bring?

More disease and fewer doctors. If people cannot afford good food, proper housing, simple medicines - disease has easy access; the overcrowding helps disease to spread more quickly. Simple diseases kill poor people. Some doctors are not so willing to work in these areas.

Little education and little hope. Parents cannot afford books, magazines or newspapers. Many people cannot read at all. The majority may make it very hard for the interested minority to learn. There is little chance of being able to get a skilled job with better wages.

Little power in society. Most politicians recognise that poor people cannot change governments, but rich people who are afraid of being made poorer can do so. It is safer (for a while) for governments to please the rich than to please the poor. Sewerage, roads, street lights, water supply are often worst where poor people live.

More trouble with the police.

Shorter lives.

In a rich land

Within rich lands, there are big differences.

In England and Wales in 1973, the top 10% of the nation owned 67.3% of all personal wealth; the bottom 50% owned almost nothing. The top 0.1% of the population owns about 12% of all personal wealth in England and Wales.

The top 10% of the nation received 23.6% of the nation's income while the bottom 50% received 24% of the income (figures after tax). The

very poorest are poor, although the average income in 1973 was around £50 per week.

In a rich world

In Bangladesh the annual per capita income is £25, and the literacy rate is 21%. Life expectancy is 47-49 years.

In Chad the annual per capita income is £25, and the literacy rate is 12% (men) and 2% (women). Life expectancy is 35 years.

In Ethiopia the annual per capita income is £26, and with one doctor per 71,000 people the life expectancy is 38 years.

In Paraguay (the poorest South American country) the average annual per capita income is £88, life expectancy is 59 years, and the literacy rate is 75%.

Mother Teresa spoke of her work in Calcutta, describing the poverty and despair, the plight of people who lived and died on the pavements; she went on to say something like "But here in the West you have another (and more dreadful) poverty, a poverty of the spirit".

Members of a group may take a vow of poverty, so that private wealth is replaced by the care of the community. This is to increase the feeling of interdependence, to lessen personal pride in possessions, and to enable each person to concentrate more on the aims of the group.

In the Beatitudes Jesus said "Blessed are you poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God". Jesus knew what real poverty is, so he was not being frivolous or superficial. It would be worth considering what he had in mind.

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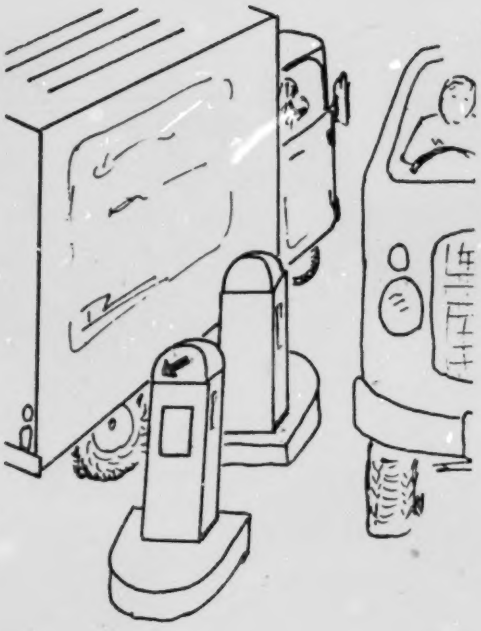
Refugees



The little islands in the middle of busy roads are called "pedestrian refuges". Each provides a place where someone can find greater safety for a time before moving on; it is not absolutely safe, and it is not a place to stay permanently.

The first was made in London in 1846 by a Col. Pierrepoint who wanted to cross the road safely to his club.

International refugees look for the same kind of temporary shelter. There are hundreds of thousands of such refugees, and they are in every continent. Since 1951 the United Nations High Commission for Refugees has helped 16,000,000 people.

Some refugees leave their homes because of so-called natural disasters - earthquake or flood.

Some refugees leave their homes because of civil war or foreign invasion.

Some refugees leave their homes because of a change in government - by election or by coup.

Refugees may need a lot of help - food, medical care, clothing, shelter, protection from violence, aid in finding work and a permanent home. Some want to wait until the situation at home changes, and they can return to their old positions; many of these should be called "exiles" rather than refugees, and they do not need the same kinds of help.

Costs

The World Council of Churches has been helping refugees for years, spending many thousands of dollars and organising assistance from church groups (e.g. $50,000 and 100 tents to Timor in October 1975).

A report on Angola from the World Council of Churches shows how complicated refugee situations can be:

"Important movements of the population (Portuguese leaving the country, hundreds of thousands of Angolans returning from exile, and thousands fleeing from one part of the country to another as the fighting continues) place a heavy burden on an economy sorely handicapped by the departure of skilled workers, the lack of communication facilities and petrol. Some $6 million will be needed during the next five months to keep alive some 300,000 displaced persons, according to estimates of the World Council's two-member team." After this report, things grew worse than expected.

By the end of 1975, out of about 400,000 European settlers in Angola only 10,000 - 15,000 remained. The strain of helping the Portuguese refugees who went to Portugal put the Portuguese government into difficulties at an awkward time. The violence and reported cruelty of the three main "liberation movements" increased the difficulties for the thousands of people trying to stay alive in Angola.

The earthquakes in Northern Italy in May 1976 came just before an Italian general election, and the argument over arrangements for relief and rebuilding were said to have affected the national vote.

The cost of relief is paid in more than just money.

Effects

The movements of refugees also affect people who might think they had nothing to do with the trouble.

Schools in the London Borough of Haringey were affected by the war in Cyprus in 1974. About 1000 Cypriot refugee school children came to live in Haringey, and most of these (aged 7 - 11 yrs) went into Primary Schools. The schools had to arrange special classes and bring in extra teachers for everybody's sake - of the 35 extra teachers, many were specialists in English as a second language. Several welfare assistants and more language training equipment also had to be found. When the new school year started in September 1975, 700 of the refugees were still in Haringey schools.

For most refugees, every part of life is changed. A different language is spoken, food is obtained and cooked differently, clothes are

different, work is different, standards of good behaviour are different, housing is different, hopes and ambitions are different.

Making refugees

Within the last few years, the following events have made people refugees:

Chile: In September 1973 the Allende government was overthrown by an army coup. In September 1975 more than 20,000 Chilean refugees still needed help. Within Chile, there were several thousand refugees from other countries who felt themselves to be in great danger because of the change of government. Bishop Frenz (of the Lutheran Church) has led much of the work on behalf of refugees in Chile, and over 8,000 refugees have found homes in more than 40 countries (including Rumania, Sweden, France, Algeria, Australia, Canada, Honduras, Poland, Switzerland, United Kingdom).

Honduras: September 1974, Hurricane Fifi killed 2,000 people in one night and left about 600,000 people homeless. Aid was sent by Church and government agencies, but eight months later the refugee camp at El Progresso still held 250 families (1,500 people) in shacks made out of wood scraps, cardboard and bits of corrugated iron.

Vietnam: In April 1975 the government of South Vietnam (in Saigon) surrendered to the government of North Vietnam (in Hanoi) and the Viet Cong, so ending an internal war that started in 1947. Thousands of South Vietnamese left the country, many more left their homes. Refugee camps were established in Guam and in the USA. Some refugees have since returned home, but many still need help. Those who left home at the end of the war were fewer than those made homeless during the war.

Mozambique: In 1975 the Portuguese government decided to hand over power to an African government (Frelimo) following years of internal (guerrilla) warfare. Many thousands of Africans had left the areas controlled by the Portuguese, some to live in the Frelimo-controlled parts of Mozambique, some to live in Tanzania. During the war money from funds such as the World Council of Churches' Programme to Combat Racism has paid for schools and clinics in Frelimo areas, but when Mozambique became independent from Portugal most refugees wanted to return home - and needed help in many different ways. Once it became clear that the change would happen, many Portuguese left Mozambique and became refugees in South Africa.

At risk

Refugees are homeless.

Because they are homeless they may become violent or they may give

up. If they are homeless for long it is impossible to remain just the kind of people they used to be. Their "world" has changed, and they are changed.

In October 1975 a small group of Chilean refugees in Buenos Aires occupied the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and held staff members hostage for two days in order to draw attention to their troubles. The Government of Algeria accepted the refugees and their families on a temporary basis, but these few who were helped are only a tiny fraction of the desperate multitude all over the world.

Obtain the UNHCR newsletter (6 times a year) from the UNHCR Public Information Section, Palais des Nations, CH 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland.

Find out why the Palestinian refugees are still in camps a generation after they became homeless. What are the attitudes of the governments and other organisations most closely concerned?

Compare conditions of refugees with the conditions of immigrant workers - people who have left home for work, and who are often given only the worst work and are resented and oppressed by the residents of the country where they live without finding a home.

Compare stories about refugees from the Great Plague in Britain with stories about refugees who have crossed the Berlin Wall in West Germany.

On a world map, mark the countries where people have become refugees in the last 12 months. Use "N" to show a natural disaster (earthquake, flood, drought), "C" to show a civil war or rebellion, and "I" to show invasion or other kinds of outside interference.

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Race

The Big Race

"It's a lovely day for the race."
"What race?"
"The human race".

But if you want to give more detail about a person than just "human" it is more difficult. Racial grouping is a convenient tool for dividing people, but it is not as accurate as we might think.

There are facts about racial differences, there are ideas based on facts about racial differences, and there are ideas about racial differences which are not based on any facts. We have to check up on what is being said.

Using 'Race'

"Race" is a biological term. It is used for plants and insects as well as for mammals, reptiles and birds. When people study these other creatures they use the word very carefully, with no idea of "valuing" them.

If we want to use the idea of race for people, we can speak of the three races of humanity mentioned by social scientists. These are CAUCASOID, MONGOLOID and NEGROID.

Statistics about blood groups, bone structure, hair type and the chemicals in ear wax are some of the details that have to be considered. Skin colour is not enough.

Because these groups are so enormous (only three for the 4,000,000,000 people of the world) there is very great biological variety within each one. There has been so much moving and mixing through the ages that only a very isolated community could be racially "pure".

The British are very mixed because of history and geography. Blood groups can give some idea about the ancestry of a family, indicating Anglo-saxon, Viking, Celtic, and possibly even earlier "British" ancestors. Many history books describe how wave after wave of people came to settle in the British Isles in the last 40,000 years.

Biologists have their own reasons for wanting to identify race. Why do other people think this is important?

Here is one personal answer.

DIVIDE IN ORDER TO EXPLOIT

People like being selfish, but they do not like to see their own selfishness because they agree that selfishness is wrong and ugly. They want more than a fair share without feeling greedy.

One way to do this is to belong to a group which has a "natural" right to special treatment - that is, to believe that your group privilege is a part of life, and not to let anyone question it.

Your special group, your privileged class, might appear in several ways. It might be a hereditary aristocracy, first established by invasion and conquest (Normans or Brahmins), or a religious group (as in Ireland or Lebanon) or a political party (as in USSR or Haiti). The signs of privilege might be dress, accent, manners or party card.

When life changes so much that the old lines of division fade away, new ones are invented. If people at the bottom of the heap cannot change the system, they invent a new group to go below them. One of the commonest new lines is skin colour, with colours called races.

Skin colour

Pink-browns, mid-browns and dark-browns are called "whites", "yellows", "reds" and "blacks". This makes them sound completely different from each other. Skin colour is used in place of other more accurate racial characteristics. Life is changed to divide people by colour.

We can use the colour of people's skins as a mask which stops us really seeing others as real people. Even if we do not know it, our thoughts might be like those repeated in the next three paragraphs. When they are spoken out loud like this, they do not seem reasonable but if they are just in the mind we do not question ourselves.

Skin colour is easy to see, so:-
Someone of a different colour can be classified while still a complete stranger, so there is no need to speak or listen, and it is easier to be unfair to a stranger than to a known person.

Skin colour is permanent, so:-
Someone who is put into a deprived class or a hated class because of colour cannot get out of that class, and cannot claim to be equal to me.

Skin colour is natural, so:-
Someone's colour cannot be my fault, and so if I take a bigger share because I am the "right" colour, that is natural and no fault of mine. Or, it is not my fault if I hate people whom I envy.

People are not really interested in race. They want an easy way of deciding who is "important", and who can be envied, oppressed, hated or ignored. But when the starting point is wrong, everything else will probably be wrong.

Discrimination

The place where people live, learn and work will affect their progress - poor places, poor progress (probably). Their race may have something to do with where people live, but then good or bad progress is an accident of place, not a consequence of race.

The South African government has laws about race, laws which say where you can live, whom you can marry, whether you can vote etc. To apply these laws, government officials have to inspect people to classify them. It sometimes happens that a father and mother are classified as "white" and their child is classified as "coloured". A husband and wife may be classified into different groups. The inspector may seem foolish, but the family is broken up by law.

When discrimination by race is taken to a logical conclusion, it can lead to the gas chambers and concentration camps which the Nazis set up as the "final solution" to their problem of how to deal with the Jews.

Try to find the facts behind statements about race and racial groups. Try to find out what words mean, and why they are chosen (for example, "native" and "immigrant").

Among the facts that can be checked are the racial mixtures of past English cricket teams, Great Britain's Rugby League teams, the British Olympic Games teams, British champion professional boxers and top pop groups, as well as a mixed society.

We sometimes speak about large areas as though the people who live there are all the same. For example, we talk about Britain, but the English Midlander is not the same as a Tynesider, and the North Welsh are as different from Londoners as Lowland Scots are from Cornish people. We talk about the West Indies, but the Barbadians are not the same as Jamaicans; about West Africa, but Nigerians and Ghanaians are very different; about India, but with 300,000,000 people in a country stretching well over 1,000 miles from North to South there are big regional differences (and racial differences). Choose one area and find out what are the ranges of nationality, race, music, language, religion and dress.

The Jews are one of the most persecuted racial groups in history, but there are many different types of Jew. Find pictures of the mixture in modern Israel, and decide which racial group you would put the people in if you did not know they were Jewish.

The Christian Church grew out of a Jewish Community. Find pictures of the 1975 General Assembly of the World Council of Churches and list the differences and similarities in race, nationality and denomination.

Islam has spread over a large part of the world. On a world map find the Muslim strongholds and paste on typical portraits of people of those areas.

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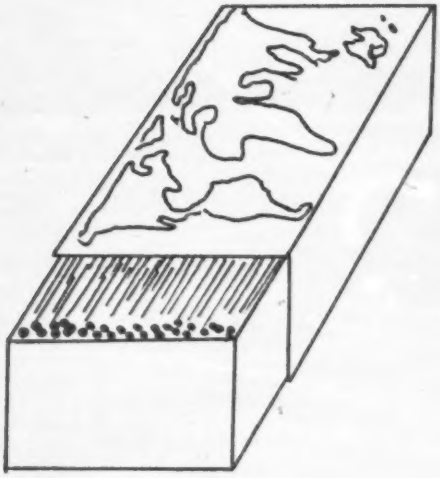
Resources



A man has a box of matches.

Average contents, 32 matches, but he probably doesn't count the contents.

He lights the gas fire, he lights the boiler. He uses two or three for candles on his daughter's birthday cake, he gives a stranger two or three to light his pipe. He uses some to find the switch in a dark room, and he strikes three together to enjoy the bright flame. Some more are used as toothpicks, and if any break he throws them away.

A man with a box of matches.

A man with the only box of matches.

And now it begins to rattle a bit emptily.
And other people want some of the matches.
And suddenly he realises there are only a dozen left, and he can't get any more.

The governments and industries of the rich nations are like the man picking his teeth, and the box of matches is this planet.

Limits

The size of the earth is known. We cannot enlarge it, replace it, or renew it.

The mineral resources of the earth are limited. All the oil and coal and natural gas, bauxite and chrome and iron, gold and silver, that can be made have been made. When all the supplies have been found and used, no more can be made.

We have heard a lot about oil supplies. The rich countries demand all the oil they want, and they have expected the price to be fixed for their convenience. The oil producers have just realised that their oil is now almost the only thing some of them have to sell and in a few decades it will be finished - so they are trying to make it last longer and to pay for new industries by putting up the price.

They might simply ration their oil, but then what will the powerful nations do which rely on oil for their way of life? Where does Britain fit into this as oil user and oil producer? Could Britain refuse to sell North Sea oil to other countries in order to make it last?

People have been on the earth for about 10,000 years, but we have been using oil for only a tiny fraction of that time. Even though some oil fields are still being found, no more oil is being made, and the supplies will not last another 10,000 years at the rate we use oil.

Rations

At present, rationing is by wealth.

When the 1973 Russian wheat harvest failed, the Russian government arranged to buy grain from the USA. This was done secretly, but such large orders kept the price high for the whole of 1974, so that Russian cattle were fed on grain while the people of countries in Southern Asia starved because they were not rich enough to buy in the American market.

When oil prices were put up, the rich nations continued to buy. Even if less oil was bought (British imports fell from 58m tons in the first half of 1974 to 44m tons the first half of 1975), the main saving was in luxury use. The poorer countries had just welcomed the "Green Revolution", which increased their food crops by using fertilisers and mechanical cultivation with new seeds; the extra costs squashed the Revolution.

On the present system, the rich can buy grain to feed to cattle and canaries, while the poor cannot buy grain for people: the rich can buy fertilisers for lawns and cemeteries, while the poor cannot buy fertiliser for their fields; the rich can buy oil for speed boats and private aeroplanes, while the poor cannot buy oil for tractors and buses.

Countries have shown in the past that people will accept fair rationing systems when they understand the limits on supplies and when they care about others - when they care as much about others as about themselves.

The man with the box of matches has to do two things. He must be careful about what he has left, and use them for the most important purposes. He must also try to find sensible alternatives to matches.

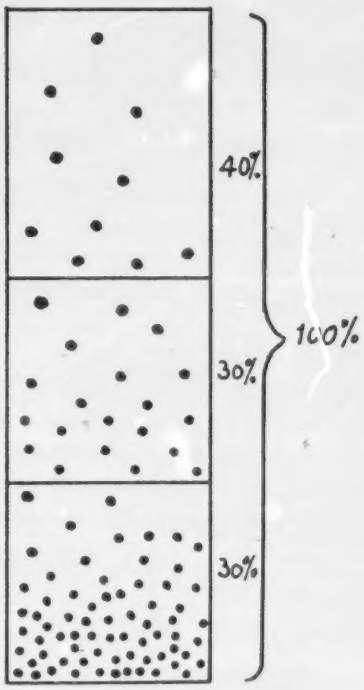
Unfair shares

When world rationing is by wealth:-

The U.S.A. takes 40% of the world's resources for only 10% of the world's people;

The other rich countries (which includes us) take another 30% of the world's resources for another 20% of the world's people;

The other 70% of the world's people have to make do with the remaining 30% of the world's resources, and so the poorest of the poor die.



When Britain was run more or less for the benefit of the rich, and the poor were left to suffer their poverty, violence and theft were commonplace. People were not crowded into fast moving cities as many of us are today, but sheep stealers, footpads and highwaymen were hanged by the hundred.

The divided nations of the world have not yet begun to see themselves as people, together. The world is run more or less for the benefit of the rich, including the British. We rich nations (less than a third of the world's people) take nearly three-quarters of

the world's resources; we do not need all this, so we waste a lot of it without even noticing.

Development agencies (like Christian Aid) do their best to help the poor and to teach the rich, and all the time they are learning what their work is. Rich governments agreed at the United Nations that they would give 0.7% of their Gross National Product every year for international aid, but they give less than half of what they promised.

The British Government has a Ministry of Overseas Development, and gave 0.38% (1974) of the Gross National Product as official aid; several British churches encourage their members to give 1% of their annual income to special Development funds as proof that they care enough as people to share with all people.

If the man with the box of matches realises what is happening in time, he will do the two things suggested on page 3. What are the ways in which people are trying to do the same two things for the world's resources?

What weight of rubbish is cleared annually by your local council? What is the average amount of rubbish per person in the area? How much of this rubbish is recycled or burned to produce power?

Can you find anything about salvage schemes in your area? These might deal with glass, paper, various metals.

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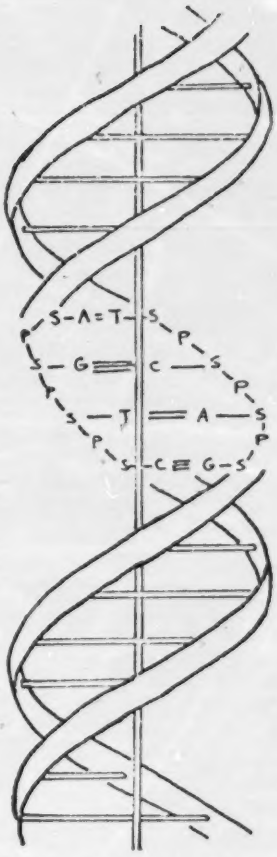
One World

Many people who never read the Bible know how it starts: "In the beginning God created ...". Probably as many people know that towards the end of the new Testament there is a word-picture of God's creation of "a new heaven and a new earth".

From a religious, at least as much as from a scientific viewpoint, all people are the same species, and there is no way we can change this. Within our bodies, from the very beginning, there is a set of instructions which controls all the genetic factors of our development. The whole universe is made up of the same basic kind of matter, and there is a set of instructions for that too.

From the beginning it has been like this, and a lot of the troubles we can see have been started because people wanted to behave as though it was not like this. We might say it is like wanting to use a pneumatic tyre and refusing to pump air into it.



DNA double helix
- your gene code

Punctures

The ways people have tried to change the created pattern have been by dividing in order to do better than their rivals and competitors. Many of the divisions have been taken up into one party political group or another, but the divisions and the dangers were there long before they were tied up with jargon and party programmes.

There are questions about life, so we should not let people keep us from asking them. At the same time there are questions about divisions, and we should look carefully at the answers we might be offered - some of them will be answers to questions we have not asked.

> If there is one world, created as humanity's home, why is there such an unfair sharing of what is in the store cupboard?
>
> If there is one human species, why are some people so easily kept in an unfair relationship to the rest, so that they carry nearly all the troubles?
>
> When there are so many people and organisations talking about this, why does nothing seem to improve?

Patches

The world, of course, is not a tyre. The world is people at home. A type can be patched, and be nearly as good as new, but the world has to be treated right to work properly. The world is not punctured, it is wounded.

This means that it is no use trying to keep things going on a wrong basis, just by putting patches over the wounds. If a wound is covered with a patch, and left, the wound worsens. If people are starving because they are treated as non-persons, it is no use giving them a bit of food so that they will not quite die - the cure is to treat them as a real part of humanity, just like us.

If people are kept out of good jobs, or places of influence and power, because they are treated as non-persons, it is no use taking the odd one or two for special treatment (and getting this into the papers and on TV) - the cure is to treat them as a real part of humanity, just like us.

Differences do exist, and they are real, but many of them are just accidents of where people are born. Many other differances are just differences between one person and another. The rest of the differences are part of the pattern that should make the world an interesting and enjoyable place to live.

When we can get beyond our own or our group's selfishness, and judge our relationships by something much more important, we find that we can treat and think of others as persons. Paul said: "In Christ there is no such thing as a Jew and Greek, slave, and free, male and female, for you are all one ..." (Galations 3.28; see also Colossians 3. 10 & 11).

We're all affected

This means that if I want to change the situations of other people (to see non-persons as persons) I have to accept that my position will change.

If someone is starving because I (and my family and my neighbours and my nation) am eating too much and too wastefully, the only way for starvation to end is if I take less.

If someone has to do all the filthy, low-paid work because I (and my family and my neighbours and my nation) have great privileges, the only way for exploitation to end is if I have less power.

To make real sense of this, I will have to take out the general words, and put in the hard words about hunger, poverty, race etc, and then see how it affects the things I enjoy. Each of us (with our own privileges of school, roof, clothes, etc) has to do the same. There is a big difference between giving up a bit of what you have because of your privileges, and giving up your privileges - think about the ways in which the people who exploit you cling to their privileges, and ask whether you are any more willing to share than they are.

Helping

As people we need a lot of help. We need help to see where the one world is being wounded, we need help to learn what needs to be done, and we need a lot of help to try to do what we know is right.

People in the Churches are just people, but because so many of the ideas of unity and sharing and right and wrong come from Christian teaching, there is some help for such people. This begins with the idea that God not only created one world, but he cares for it with all his people.

Within the Church there are men and women from all continents who are able to study the situation and then to explain it to others so that they become involved. Many of these experts are famous all over the world, and are as much respected by non-Christians as by Christians.

The Churches also make opportunities for people to meet each other and to listen to each other. For some members of "non-person" groups this is the only chance they have of being known, so that they can be seen as people.

The Churches provide ways of working for change. Some of these (like the Programme to Combat Racism, of the World Council of Churches) cause great arguments, but others (like the Refugee service of the World Council of Churches) have general support.

Some people see that one great power for change is the Communion Service (Eucharist) of the Churches, as people come to understand better what they are doing. The food and drink is important as it is set aside to be shared according to God's command.

The Churches take seriously both the need for help with the personal battle over right and wrong, and the need to continue this into the world community.

Life system

Perhaps we are too close to see the kind of situation we are in. We have not yet been able to appreciate what the men who walked on the moon have seen - the earth is quite a small ball spinning in space. It has stayed together because it is in balance; it is in balance because of the distribution of rock and water, etc; it is in balance because of its relationship with the sun and planets and all the rest of Creation. The people part of the earth has to be in balance too.

Also we have not yet been able to appreciate what the geologists and archaeologists have seen - the world is a living and developing unit. Long before modern science took shape, St. Paul described creation as groaning in labour for the birth of a new society (Romans 8. 18-25), and now we can see ourselves as part of this whole process. If we stop the process by refusing to cooperate, there will be the risks that every abortion brings.

St. Paul had a much smaller geographical picture of the world than we have. Find out his ideas about supporting each other across the world. (1 Corinthians 16. 1-4, 2 Corinthians 8 & 9).

Find out as much as possible about a few powerful regional or commodity organisations (e.g. N.A.T.O., O.P.E.C., E.E.C.). What are the aims of these groups?

The older divisions of the world were reflected in the old patterns of missionary work. Find out how the present international relations of the Church in the World reflect an idea of unity.

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